United Nations E/CN.6/2011/NGO/32

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 December 2010

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fifth session
22 February-4 March 2011
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2011/1.

10-66784 (E) 130111

Please recycle

Statement*

1. The Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society applauds the efforts of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women to further the protection and progress of women and girls throughout the world. Our statement is directed particularly to the scheduled consideration of progress on the agreed conclusions from the Commission's fifty-first session, which addressed "the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child".

2. Consideration of the welfare of the girl child should, we believe, begin by remembering the commitments memorialized in paragraphs 14 to 17 of the Plan of Action of the United Nations Special Session on Children.

3. Herculean efforts must indeed be made to extend protection and hope to girl children who are without parental support whatever the reason, whether for a cause as common as divorce, as deadly as AIDS, or as sinister as sex trafficking. But in reaching out to girl children who are not sheltered by a family, we cannot afford to forget our commitment to protect the world's children by protecting the natural family.

4. This commitment is a continuing one, expressed earlier, for example, in paragraph 39 of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development: "Particular efforts should be made to protect children and youth by: Promoting family stability and supporting families in providing mutual support, including in their role as nurturers and educators of children."

5. The celebration by the General Assembly of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family on 6 December 2004, offered an important opportunity for reflection on the fundamental role of the family. Statements were made on that occasion, among others, by Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury of Bangladesh and Wade Horn of the United States of America. It was also on that occasion when Secretary-General Kofi Annan emphasized the commitment of the United Nations to the family.

6. The Howard Center thanks the Commission for its important work in seeking to better the lives of women and girls worldwide, and urges cognizance of the fact that a core component of such effort must be to protect and promote the family as the fundamental unit of society. We believe that the specific suggestions offered by the United States representative at the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family have continuing relevance:

(a) Government ought to create the conditions that allow strong and healthy families to thrive;

(b) Government should recognize the unique and irreplaceable contributions of mothers and fathers to the lives of their children;

(c) Public policy ought to strengthen healthy marriages and, where possible, the two-parent family;

(d) Government policy should recognize that every child has dignity and worth, and as such ought to support all children and families.

* Issued without formal editing.